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Assistance in mine action

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Assistance in mine action

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 48/7 of 19 October 1993, 49/215 of 23 December 1994, 50/82 of 14 December 1995, 51/149 of 13 December 1996 and 52/173 of 18 December 1997 on assistance in mine clearance and its resolutions 53/26 of 17 November 1998 and 54/191 of 17 December 1999 on assistance in mine action, all adopted without a vote,

Considering mine action to be an important component of United Nations humanitarian and development activities,

Reaffirming its deep concern at the tremendous humanitarian and development problems caused by the presence of mines and other unexploded devices that constitute an obstacle to the return of refugees and other displaced persons, to humanitarian aid operations and to reconstruction and economic development, as well as to the restoration of normal social conditions, and that have serious and lasting social and economic consequences for the populations of mine-affected countries,

Bearing in mind the serious threat that mines and other unexploded devices pose to the safety, health and lives of local civilian populations, as well as of personnel participating in humanitarian, peacekeeping and rehabilitation programmes and operations,

Reiterating its dismay at the high number of victims of mines, especially among civilian populations, including women and children, and recalling in this context Commission on Human Rights resolutions 1995/79 of 8 March 1995,[1]

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 3* and corrigenda (E/1995/23 and Corr.1 and 2), chap. II, sect. A.

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1996/85 of 24 April 1996,[2] 1997/78 of 18 April 1997,[3] 1998/76 of 22 April 1998,[4] 1999/80 of 28 April 1999[5] and 2000/85 of 28 April 2000[6] on the rights of the child and resolutions 1996/27 of 19 April 1996,[2] 1998/31 of 17 April 1998,[4] 2000/51 of 25 April 2000[6] and decision 1997/107 of 11 April 1997[3] on the human rights of persons with disabilities,

Deeply alarmed by the number of mines that continue to be laid each year, as well as the presence of a large number of mines and other unexploded devices as a result of armed conflicts, and thus convinced of the necessity and urgency of a significant increase in mine-clearance efforts by the international community with a view to eliminating the threat of landmines to civilians as soon as possible,

Noting the decisions taken at the First Annual Conference of the States Parties to Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects,[7] held at Geneva from 15 to 17 December 1999, particularly with respect to Protocol II to the Convention, and the inclusion in Amended Protocol II of a number of provisions of importance for mine-clearance operations, notably the requirement of detectability,

Noting the entry into force of Amended Protocol II to the Convention on 3 December 1998,

Recalling that the States parties at the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention declared their commitment to keep the provisions of Amended Protocol II under review in order to ensure that the concerns regarding the weapons it covers are addressed, and that they would encourage the efforts of the United Nations and other organizations to address all problems related to landmines,

Noting the entry into force on 1 March 1999 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction[8] and that the Convention was signed or has been acceded to by one hundred and thirty-nine States and ratified by one hundred eight States, also noting the conclusions of the Second Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, held at Geneva from 11 to 15 September 2000, taking note of the reaffirmed commitments that were made to, among other things, provide assistance for mine clearance and rehabilitation, the social and economic reintegration of mine victims and mine-awareness programmes, and also taking note of the work of the inter-sessional programme established by States parties to that Convention,

Stressing the need to convince mine-affected States to halt new deployments of anti-personnel mines in order to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of mine-clearance operations,

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[2] Ibid., *1996, Supplement No. 3* and corrigendum (E/1996/23 and Corr.1), chap. II, sect. A.

[3] Ibid., *1997, Supplement No. 3* (E/1997/23), chap. II.

[4] Ibid., *1998, Supplement No. 3* (E/1998/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[5] Ibid., *1999, Supplement No. 3* (E/1999/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[6] Ibid., *2000, Supplement No. 3* (E/2000/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[7] CCW/AP.II/CONF.I/2.

[8] See CD/1478.

Recognizing the important role that the international community, in particular States involved in the deployment of mines, can play in assisting mine clearance in mine-affected countries by providing necessary maps and information and appropriate technical and material assistance to remove or otherwise render ineffective existing minefields, mines and booby traps,

Concerned about the limited availability of safe and cost-effective mine-detection and mine-clearance equipment, as well as the need for effective global coordination in research and development to improve the relevant technology, and conscious of the need to promote further and more rapid progress in this field and to foster international technical cooperation to this end,

Concerned about the limited availability of the technical, material and financial resources necessary to meet the cost associated with mine-clearance activities in mine-affected countries,

Recognizing that, in addition to the primary role of States, the United Nations has an important role to play in the field of assistance in mine action,

Reaffirming the need to reinforce international cooperation in the area of mine action and to devote the necessary resources towards that end,

Welcoming the mine-action coordination centres already established under the auspices of the United Nations, as well as the creation of international trust funds for mine clearance and mine assistance,

Noting with satisfaction the inclusion in the mandates of several peacekeeping operations of provisions relating to mine-action work carried out under the direction of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations Secretariat, in the context of such operations,

Commending the action already taken by the United Nations system, donor and recipient Governments, the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations to coordinate their efforts and seek solutions to the problems related to the presence of mines and other unexploded devices, as well as their assistance to victims of mines,

Also commending the role of the Secretary-General in increasing public awareness of the problem of landmines,

1. *Welcomes* the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations in assistance in mine action;[9]

2. *Calls*, in particular, for the continuation of the efforts of the United Nations, with the assistance of States and institutions as appropriate, to foster the establishment of mine-action capacities in countries where mines constitute a serious threat to the safety, health and lives of the local population or an impediment to social and economic development efforts at the national and local levels, emphasizes the importance of developing national mine-action capacities, and urges all Member States, in particular those that have the capacity to do so, to assist mine-affected countries in the establishment and development of national capacities in mine clearance, mine awareness and victim assistance;

[9] A/55/542.

3. *Invites* Member States to develop national programmes, in cooperation with the relevant bodies of the United Nations system where appropriate, to promote awareness of landmines, especially among women and children;

4. *Expresses its appreciation* to Governments, regional organizations and other donors for their financial and in-kind contributions to mine action, including contributions for emergency operations and for national capacity-building programmes;

5. *Appeals* to Governments, regional organizations and other donors to continue their support to mine action through further contributions, including contributions through the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action, to allow for the timely delivery of mine-action assistance in emergency situations;

6. *Encourages* all relevant multilateral and national programmes and bodies to include, in coordination with the United Nations, activities related to mine action in their humanitarian, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development assistance activities, where appropriate, bearing in mind the need to ensure national ownership, sustainability and capacity-building;

7. *Stresses* the importance of international support for emergency assistance to victims of mines and for the care and rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration, of the victims, and also stresses that such assistance should be integrated into broader public health and socio-economic strategies;

8. *Encourages* Governments, relevant United Nations bodies and other donors to take further action to promote gender- and age-appropriate mine-awareness programmes, victim assistance and child-centred rehabilitation, thereby reducing the number of child victims and relieving their plight;

9. *Emphasizes again* the important role of the United Nations in the effective coordination of mine-action activities, including those by regional organizations, and especially the role of the Mine Action Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations Secretariat on the basis of the policy on mine action and effective coordination developed by the Secretary-General in annex II to his report;[10]

10. *Emphasizes* in this regard the role of the Mine Action Service as the focal point for mine action within the United Nations system and its ongoing collaboration with and coordination of all mine-related activities of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes;

11. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to develop further a comprehensive mine-action strategy, taking into consideration the impact of the landmine problem on rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, with a view to ensuring the effectiveness of assistance in mine action by the United Nations, emphasizes in this respect the importance of further multisectoral assessments and surveys, notes in this regard the ongoing development by the United Nations of standards and certification guidelines for such surveys, and emphasizes the need for an inclusive process to be followed in the development of such standards and guidelines;

12. *Emphasizes* in this respect the importance of developing a comprehensive information management system for mine action, under the overall coordination of

[10] A/53/496.

the Mine Action Service and with the support of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, in order to facilitate the setting of priorities and the coordination of field activities;

13. *Welcomes* recent approaches with regard to the establishment of mine-action coordination centres, encourages the further establishment of such centres, especially in emergency situations, and also encourages States to support the activities of mine-action coordination centres and trust funds established to coordinate assistance in mine action under the auspices of the Mine Action Service;

14. *Encourages*, whenever appropriate, the use of the United Nations Office for Project Services by the United Nations, including in peacekeeping operations, in order to ensure the unity and continuity of implementation required for integrated mine-action programmes;

15. *Urges* Member States and regional, governmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations to continue to extend full assistance and cooperation to the Secretary-General and, in particular, to provide him with information and data, as well as other appropriate resources that could be useful in strengthening the coordination role of the United Nations in mine action, in particular in the fields of mine awareness, training, surveying, detection and clearance, scientific research on mine-detection and mine-clearance technology and information on and distribution of medical equipment and supplies;

16. *Emphasizes* in this regard the importance of recording the location of mines, of retaining all such records and making them available to concerned parties upon cessation of hostilities, and welcomes the strengthening of the relevant provisions in international law;

17. *Calls upon* Member States, especially those that have the capacity to do so, to provide the necessary information and technical, financial and material assistance, as appropriate, and to locate, remove, destroy or otherwise render ineffective minefields, mines, booby traps and other devices in accordance with international law, as soon as possible;

18. *Urges* Member States and regional, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations that have the ability to do so to provide, as appropriate, technological assistance to mine-infested countries and to promote scientific research and development on humanitarian mine-action techniques and technology so that mine-action activities may be carried out more effectively at lower costs and through safer means and to promote international collaboration in this regard;

19. *Encourages* Member States and regional, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations to continue to support ongoing activities to promote appropriate technology, as well as international operational and safety standards for humanitarian mine-action activities, and in this context welcomes the initiation of the revision of international mine-clearance standards and the development of guidelines for the use of mine-detection dogs and mechanical mine-clearance equipment, as well as the development of an international test and evaluation programme;

20. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session a comprehensive report on the role of the United Nations in

assistance in mine action, including the progress achieved with regard to all relevant issues outlined both in his previous reports to the Assembly on assistance in mine clearance and mine action and in the present resolution, the progress made by the International Committee of the Red Cross and other international and regional organizations as well as national programmes, and the operation of the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action and other mine-action programmes;

21. *Invites* the Secretary-General to study how to secure a more sound financial basis for the Mine Action Service and to present options to this effect to the General Assembly;

22. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-sixth session the item entitled "Assistance in mine action".